

latter benefit the general public in ways that are more visible and demonstrable. Despite the reforms being carried out in its innovation system, France will continue to invest in R&D in aerospace, electronics, communications, and nuclear technology. Since 1997, the French government has been announcing new strategic directions for public research: the adoption of measures to encourage innovation and investment; consideration of the needs and expectations of the public; and the designation of information technology and health-related research as the economic engines of the future. Social and environmental concerns have begun to influence the thrust of science policy, and political leaders will increasingly turn their attention to topics related to urban planning, medical science, and clean, high-performance transportation technologies.

Investment in space should remain stable. France has retained its status as the leading European nation in space and will remain the most important and active member of the European Space Agency (ESA) thanks to its financial contributions in a broad variety of areas, the size of its industry, and its international prestige.

The Canadian Embassy in Paris periodically organizes thematic partnership workshops to encourage the formation of teams that can respond to calls for tenders from the European Union under the access rules of the Canada-European Community Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation. The most recent workshops were on information technology, agri-food, biotechnology, and remote sensing.

**Conclusion:** France will continue to provide opportunities to acquire key technologies in strategic sectors and to develop new technologies together. In addition, France provides excellent opportunities for joint research and is an important market for Canadian technology. There is an excellent bilateral cooperative framework in S&T. However, small and medium businesses need to be better informed about potential markets in France, and Canadian institutions should intensify their efforts to collect information about the world-class technology available in France and improve their networks for disseminating it.

### **France within the European Union: a Favourite Partner for Canada**

France's financial contributions to the European Union are the second highest, and it is one of the main beneficiaries of EU spending on R&D under the Fifth Framework Program for Research and Technological Development. The EU budget for R&D is about \$5 billion a year.

Canada can access the European Union's R&D programs through the Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, signed in June 1995. At the tenth meeting of the Canada-France Joint Scientific Commission in September 1998, the French representatives were very interested in collaborating with Canadian researchers on EU research programs in which they themselves participate.

The research funded by the EU under these programs is supposed to be pre-competitive but it nevertheless supports applied technologies. The partnerships that form are maintained to exploit the resulting commercial opportunities on European and international markets. Some genuine partnerships have developed, for example to exploit business opportunities stemming from health research and applications using data collected by remote sensing.

**Conclusion :** French researchers can play an important role in facilitating the inclusion of their